

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

The ensuing narrative is extracted from the "Young Lady's Friend," and the writer of it is Mr. Stevens, the Editor of Zion's Herald, which is ample proof of its authenticity. It is a noble example of ministerial faithfulness, and a dreadful exhibition of murderous infatuation, with its heart rending calamity, and of divine retribution.

A DUEL.

THE Rev. Mr. M—— was a veteran itinerant preacher of the West. He related many incidents of his itinerant life. Among them was the following, which I give in his own words as much as possible.

About four miles from N—— is an extensive grove, well known as the scene of several fatal duels. As I passed it one morning on my way to my appointment in that town, I perceived a horse and vehicle among the trees, guarded by a solitary man, who appeared to be the driver. My suspicions were immediately excited, but I rode on. About a mile beyond I met another carriage, containing four persons besides the driver, and hastening with all speed.

My fears were confirmed, and I could scarcely doubt that another scene of blood was about to be enacted in those quiet solitudes. What was my duty in the case? I knew too well the tenacity of those fictitious and absurd sentiments of honor which prevailed in that section of the country, and which give to the duel a character of exalted chivalry, to suppose that my interference could be successful, yet I thought it was my duty to rebuke the sin if I could not prevent it; and in the name of the Lord I would do it. I immediately wheeled about and returned with the utmost speed to the grove.

The second carriage had arrived, and was fastened to a tree. I rode my horse near it, and throwing the driver a piece of silver, requested him to guard him. While threading my way into the forest, my thoughts were intently occupied to know how to present myself most successfully. The occasion admitted of no delay. I hastened on and soon emerged into an oval space surrounded on all sides by dense woods. At the opposite extremity stood the principals, their heads down over their pantaloons, their coats, vests, and hats off, handkerchiefs tied over their heads, and hands belting their waists. A friend and a surgeon were conversing with each while the seconds were about midway between them, arranging the dreadful conflict. One of the principals, the challenger, appeared but twenty years of age. His countenance was singularly expressive of sensibility, but also of cool determination. The other had a stout, ruffian-like bearing—a countenance easy but sinister and heartless, and he seemed bent upon to wreak his vengeance upon his antagonist.

I advanced immediately to the seconds, and declared at once my character and object. "Gentlemen," said I, "excuse my intrusion. I am a minister of the Gospel. I know not the merits of this quarrel, but both my heart and my office require me to bring about a reconciliation between the parties, if possible."

"Sir," replied one of them, "the utmost has been done to effect it without success, and this is no place to make further attempts."

"Under any circumstances, in any place, gentlemen," I replied, "it is appropriate to prevent murder; and such, in the sight of God, is the deed you are aiding. It must not be, gentlemen. In the name of the law which prohibits it—in the name of your friends, the principals—in the name of God who looks down upon you in this solitary place, I beseech you to prevent it at once: at least wash your own hands from the blood of these men. Retire from the field and refuse to assist in their mutual murder."

My emphatic remonstrance had a momentary effect. They seemed not indisposed to come to terms, if I could get the concurrence of the principals.

I passed immediately to the oldest of them. His countenance became more repulsive as I approached him. It was deeply pitted with the small pox, and there was upon it the most cold-blooded leer I ever saw on a human face. He had given the challenge. I beseeched him by every consideration of humanity and morality to recall it. I referred to the youth and inexperience of his antagonist—the conciliatory disposition of the

seconds—the fearful consequences to his soul, if he should fall, and the withering remorse which must ever follow him if he should kill the young man. He evidently thirsted for the blood of his antagonist, but observing that his friend and the surgeon seconded my reasoning, he replied, with undissembling reluctance, that he gave the challenge for sufficient reasons, and that if these reasons were removed, he might recall it, but not otherwise.

I passed to the other. I admonished him of the sin he was about to perpetrate. I referred to his probable domestic relations, and the allusion touched his heart. He suddenly wiped a tear from his eye. "Yes, sir," said he, "there are hearts which would break if they knew I was here." I referred to my conversation with the seconds and the other principal, and remarked that nothing was now necessary to effect a reconciliation but a retraction of the language which had offended his antagonist. "Sir," replied he, planting his foot firmly on the ground, and assuming a look which would have been sublime in a better cause, "Sir, I have uttered nothing but the truth respecting that man, and though I sink into the grave, I will not sanction his villainous character by a retraction."

I reasoned with increased vehemence, but no appeal to his judgement or his heart could shake his desperate firmness, and I left him with tears, which I have no doubt he would have shared under other circumstances. What could I do farther? I appealed again to the first principal, but he spurned me with a cool smile. I flew to the seconds and entreated them on any terms to adjust the matter and save the shedding of blood. But they had already measured the ground, and were ready to place the principals. "Gentlemen," said I, "the blood of this dreadful deed be upon your souls. I have acquitted myself of it." I then proceeded from the area toward my horse.

What were my emotions as I turned away in despair? What I thought I, must the duel proceed? Is there no expedient to prevent it? In a few minutes, one or both of these men may be in eternity, accused for ever with blood-guiltiness! Can I not pluck them as brands from the burning? My spirit was in a tumult of anxiety; in a moment and just as the principals were taking their positions, I was again on the ground. Standing on the line between them, I exclaimed, "In the name of God I adjure you to stop this murderous work. It must not, it cannot proceed." "Knock him down," cried the other duellist, with a fearful imprecation. "Sir," exclaimed the younger, "I appreciate your motives, but I demand of you to interfere no more with our arrangements." The seconds seized me by the arms and compelled me to retire. But I warned them at every step. Never before did I feel so deeply the value and hazard of the human soul. My remarks were without effect, except on one of the friends of the younger principal. "This is a horrible place," said he, "I cannot endure it," and he turned with me from the scene.

"Now then for it," cried one of the seconds as they returned. "Take your place." Suddenly I hastened my pace to escape the result. "One—two"—and the next sound was lost in the explosion of the pistols! "O God," shrieked a voice of agony! I turned round. The younger principal, with his hand to his face, shrank back, quivered, and fell to the ground! I rushed to him. With one hand he clung to the earth, the fingers penetrating the sod, while with the other he grasped his left jaw, which was shattered with a horrid wound. I turned with faintness from the sight. The charge had passed through the left side of the mouth, crossing the teeth, severing the jugular, and passing out at the back part of the head, laying open entirely one side of the face and neck. In this ghastly wound, amid blood and shattered teeth, had he fixed his trap, with a tenacity which could not be removed. Bleeding copiously, and convulsive with agony, he lay for several minutes, the most frightful spectacle I had ever witnessed. The countenances of the spectators expressed a conscious relief when it was announced by the surgeon that death had ended the scene. Meanwhile the undertaker and his party had left the ground.

One of the company was despatched on my horse to communicate dreadful news to the family. The dead young man was cleaned from his blood and borne immediately to his carriage. I accompanied it. It stopped before a small but elegant house. The driver ran to the door and rapped. An elderly lady opened it with frantic agitation, at the instant when we were lifting the ghastly remains from the carriage. She gazed for a moment, as if thunder struck, and fell fainting in the doorway. A servant removed her into the parlor, and, as we passed with the corpse into a rear room, I observed her extended on a sofa as pale as her hapless son.

We placed the corpse on a table, with the stiffened hand still grasping the wound, when a young lady, neatly attired in white, and with a face delicately beautiful, rushed frantic into the room, and threw her arms around it, weeping with uncontrollable emotion, and exclaiming with an agony of feeling, "My brother! my dear, dear brother! Can it be—O, can it be!" The attendants tore her away. I shall never forget the look of utter wretchedness she wore as they tore her away—her eyes dissolving in tears, and her bosom stained with her brother's blood.

The unfortunate young man was of New England origin. He had settled in the town of N——, where his business had prospered so well that he had invited his mother and sister to reside with him. His home, endeared by gentleness and love, and every temporal comfort, was a scene of unalloyed happiness, but in an evil hour he yielded to a local and absurd prejudice—a sentiment of honour falsely so called, which his education should have taught him to despise. He was less excusable than his malicious murderer, for he had more light and better sentiments. This one step ruined him and his happy family. He was interred the next day, with the regrets of the whole community.

His poor mother never left the house till she was carried to her grave, to be laid by the side of her son. She died after a delirious fever of two weeks' duration, throughout which she ceased not to implore the attendants, with tears, to preserve her hapless son from the hands of assassins, who, she imagined, kept him concealed by the murderers' purpose. His sister still lives, but poor and broken-hearted. Her beauty and energies have been wasted by sorrow, and she is dependent on others for her daily bread. I have heard some uncertain reports of his antagonist, the most probable of which is that he died three years after, of the yellow fever, at New Orleans, raving with the horrors of remorse. Such is the local estimation of this bloody deed; scarcely so high was made to bring him to justice. Alas, for the influence of fashionable opinion! It can silence by its dictates the laws of nature and God, and exalt murder to the glory of chivalry.

When we consider how many hearts of mothers, sisters and wives have been made to bleed by cruel and deadly customs, shall we not invoke the influence of woman to abolish it? It rests on an incidental tale of public opinion, a helmsentiment of honour. Whose influence is more effectual in correcting or pronouncing such sentiments than woman's? Human laws have failed to do it, but her influence can do it. Let her then, disjoin the duellist as stained with blood. Let her repel him from her society as one who has wrongly escaped the gallows.—Let her exert all the benign influence of her virtues and her charms to bring into disgrace the murderous custom which tolerates him, and it cannot but be before the distinction between the duellist and the assassin will cease.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

GOOD SAYINGS AND SHORT MAXIMS.

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG MOTHERS.

RISE so early in the morning that you may be able to secure at least half an hour for reading the Scripture and prayer before your domestic concerns require your attention. You will find this exercise admirably adapted to prepare and strengthen you to encounter, with a becoming temper and spirit, the trials and vexations of the day.

Accustom your children to make prayer and praise to God, the giver and preserver of life, the first employment in the morning and the last at night. Remember that the duties of a mother are untransferable; therefore, except in cases of unavoidable necessity, never suffer the devotional exercise of your children to be superintended by another.

See that your daughters rise early, and that they employ themselves about such domestic affairs as are suited to their years and capacities.